## CLAIMS

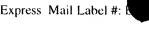
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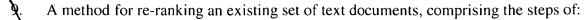
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- A method for ranking a set of documents, comprising the steps of:
  - gathering context information from the documents;
  - generating at least one rank criterion from the context information; and ranking the documents, based on the at least one rank criterion.
- 2. The method according to Claim 1, further comprising re-ranking an existing ranked result set of documents.
- 3. The method according to Claim 2, wherein said step of gathering context information comprises extracting lexical affinities from the documents.
- 4. The method according to Claim 2, wherein said step of gathering context information comprises extracting features from the documents.
- 5. The method according to Claim 2, wherein said step of gathering context information comprises extracting word frequency statistics from the documents.
- 20 6. The method according to any of Claims 1 to 5, further comprising the step of weighting of the context information by a weighting function.
  - 7. The method according to Claim 6, further comprising the step of utilizing discrete ranking levels in said weighting step.
  - 8. A method for re-ranking an existing set of text documents, comprising the steps of:
    - detecting lexical affinity terms contained in the documents;
    - presenting the lexical affinity terms to a user;
    - gathering user preferences for the lexical affinity terms; and
  - re-ranking the documents based on the user preferences.





- detecting feature terms contained in the documents;
- presenting the feature terms to a user;
- gathering user preferences for the feature terms; and
- re-ranking the documents based on the user preferences.
- A method for re-ranking an existing set of text documents, comprising the steps of:
  - creating word frequency statistics from the documents;
  - presenting the words with a minimum frequency to a user;
  - gathering user preferences for the presented words of a minimum frequency; and
  - re-ranking the documents based on the user preferences.
- A method according to any of Claims 8 to 10, wherein the re-ranking is based on 11. the original ranking position of the documents.
  - A method according to Claim 1, wherein said step of ranking the documents comprises using the following ranking and weighted ranking equations or their equivalence:

anking equation -

 $f_d(x_1, ..., x_n) = Rd$  if  $x_1, ..., x_n$  are elements of Td, and fd(x 1, ..., xn) = 0 if x 1, ..., xn are not elements of Td, wherein Rd is an "absolute" rank value of a given document "d" that has resulted from a search, and Td = (x1, ..., xn) is a tuple of context terms that are contained in the document "d";

weighted ranking equation -

[2a f(x 1,...,xa) + (a+b) f(x 1,...,xa+b) + (a+b+c) f(x 1,...,xa+b+c)] / (4a+2b+c)wherein it calculates the relevance of a document with respect to the context terms x1, ..., xm when a, b and c are the number of terms that have been assigned a high (a), medium (b) and low (c) relevance and f(x1, ..., xa), f(x1, ..., xa+b) and f(x1, ..., xa+b+c) are partial relevance functions of the document with respect to a subset of the context terms.

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- A system for ranking a set of documents, comprising:
- means for gathering context information from the documents;
- -\means for generating at least one rank criterion from the context information; and
- means for ranking the documents, based on the at least one rank criterion.
- 14. A system according to Claim 13, further comprising means for re-ranking an existing ranked result set of documents.
- 15. A system according to Claim 13, further comprising means for extracting lexical affinities from the documents in order to obtain the context information.
  - 16. A system according to Claim 16, further comprising means for weighting of the context information by a weighting function.

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- 17. A computer-readable program storage medium which stores a program for executing a method for ranking a set of documents, the method comprising the steps of:
  - gathering context information from the documents;

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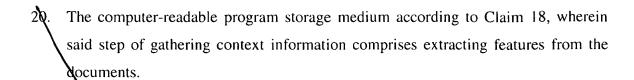
- generating at least one rank criter on from the context information; and
- ranking the documents, based on the at least one rank criterion.

18. The computer-readable program storage medium according to Claim 17, further comprising re-ranking an existing ranked result set of documents.

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19. The computer-readable program storage medium according to Claim 18, wherein said step of gathering context information comprises extracting lexical affinities from the documents.

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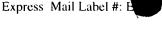
- 5 21. The computer-readable program storage medium according to Claim 18, wherein said step of gathering context information comprises extracting word frequency statistics from the documents.
- The computer-readable program storage medium according to any of Claims 17 to
  21, further comprising the step of weighting of the context information by a weighting function.
  - 23. The computer-readable program storage medium according to Claim 22, further comprising the step of utilizing discrete ranking levels in said weighting step.
  - A computer-readable program storage medium which stores a program for executing a method for re-ranking an existing set of text documents, comprising the steps of:
    - detecting lexical affinity terms contained in the documents;
    - presenting the lexical affinity terms to a user;
    - gathering user preferences for the lexical affinity terms; and
    - re-ranking the documents based on the user preferences.
- 25. A computer-readable program storage medium which stores a program for executing a method for re-ranking an existing set of text documents, comprising the steps of:
  - detecting feature terms contained in the documents;
  - presenting the feature terms to a user;
  - gathering user preferences for the feature terms; and
- 30 re-ranking the documents based on the user preferences.

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- A computer-readable program storage medium which stores a program for executing a method for re-ranking an existing set of text documents, comprising the steps of:
  - creating word frequency statistics from the documents;
  - presenting the words with a minimum frequency to a user;
  - gathering user preferences for the presented words of a minimum frequency; and
  - re-ranking the documents based on the user preferences.
- The computer-readable program storage medium according to any of Claims 24 to 27. 10 26, wherein the re-ranking is based on the original ranking position of the documents.

The computer-readable program storage medium according to Claim 17, wherein said step of ranking the documents comprises using the following ranking and yeighted ranking equations or their equivalence:

anking equation -

fd(x1, ..., xn) = Rd if x1, ..., xn are elements of Td, and

 $fd(x_1, ..., x_n) = 0$  if  $x_1, ..., x_n$  are not elements of Td,

wherein Rd is an "absolute" rank value of a given document "d" that has resulted from a search, and Td = (x1, ..., xn) is a tuple of context terms that are contained in the document "d";

weighted ranking equation -

[2a f(x1,...,xa) + (a+b) f(x1,...,xa+b) + (a+b+c) f(x1,...,xa+b+c)] / (4a+2b+c)wherein it calculates the relevance of a document with respect to the context terms x1, ..., xm when a, b and c are the number of terms that have been assigned a high (a),  $\mathbf{h}$  edium (b) and low (c) relevance and f(x1, ..., xa),  $f(x_1, ..., x_{a+b})$  and  $f(x_1, ..., x_{a+b+c})$  are partial relevance functions of the document with respect to a subset of the context terms.